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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000810

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2015

TAGS: [AM](#) [ASEC](#) [KCRM](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: UPDATE: CESIUM 137 CONFISCATED AT THE
TURKISH/GEORGIAN BORDER

REF: A. ANKARA 779

[1](#)B. YEREVAN 154

Classified By: Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor Timothy Betts, reason 1
.4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (C) EXBS Advisor met with MFA Energy Department First
Secretary Basak Tug on February 11 to discuss the truck that

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was stopped at the Turkish/Georgian border due to the
presence of cesium 137 in the scrap metal it was carrying.
Tug confirmed the facts presented previously in ref A. Tug
also provided the following additional information:

[1](#)A. (C) The Turkish Atomic Energy Authority (TAEK) was
informed of the detainment of the truck by Customs. TAEK
dispatched a technician to the Sarp Border gate who confirmed
that the substance was cesium 137. The TAEK representative
instructed the customs official to hold the truck and cargo
until a proper determination of action could be developed.

[1](#)B. (C) TAEK submitted all appropriate reports concerning the
incident to IAEA shortly after the incident occurred. In
late December, TAEK contacted the appropriate counter parts
in Georgia to assist in determining the origin of the
substance and to develop a plan of disposition. The Georgian
officials informed TAEK that the shipment originated in
Armenia and thus Armenia should be responsible for
appropriate disposal. Georgia agreed to try to assist Turkey
in coordinating disposal with Armenia.

[1](#)C. (C) In early January, Georgian officials attempted to
contact Armenian officials concerning the cargo. Georgia
agreed to allow the truck to pass back through Georgia to
Armenia, if Armenia would agree to allow it back into their
country. Armenia would not accept responsibility for the
cargo.

[1](#)D. (C) In mid-January, Turkey contacted IAEA through their
mission in Vienna to request assistance in coordinating the
disposal of the cesium with Armenia. IAEA informed Turkey
that while Armenia has an obligation to take back the
contaminated cargo, the IAEA can not force Armenia to accept
the cargo back into Armenia. IAEA officials have attempted
to work with Armenia to coordinate some type of cooperation
concerning the disposal of the cargo.

[1](#)2. (C) Tug informed EXBS Advisor that the contaminated cargo
has been moved from the Sarp border gate to their nuclear
waste holding area in Istanbul. Due to the lack of
diplomatic relations with Armenia, Turkey is hoping that one
of the intermediaries, Georgia or IAEA, will be able to work
with Armenia to properly dispose of the cargo. Tug agreed to
notify EXBS Advisor if there are any new developments in the
situation.

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